SUPPLEMENT.

VISIT OF HON. SHRI G. V. MAVALANKAR (THE SPEAKER OF THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT).

The Hon. Shri G. V. Mavalankar, Speaker of the Indian Parliament visited the House. He was seated on the dais by the side of the Hon. the President.

He was welcomed by the Hon. President as follows.

* MR. PRESIDENT :—"Hon. Members—Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the honour to introduce to you Hon. Shri G. V. Mavalankar, Speaker of the Indian Parliament. It is not as if he needs any introduction to you, but on an occasion like this, it is a necessary formality which I perform with great pleasure. First and foremost, he is one of those who willingly sacrificed their eminence at a lucrative profession for the sake of the country when the call came. His services to the Motherland as well as his great personal qualities were so greatly appreciated that he became the first Speaker of the Bombay Legislative Assembly. He was again the first Speaker of the Indian Dominion Parliament and will be the first Speaker of the Parliament of the Sovereign Indian Republic very soon to be. It is an honour of which any person can justly be proud. It is not a place conferred by a designing alien Government but a tribute to his great qualities voluntarily paid by the discerning and appreciative chosen representatives of the people of this country. With what dignity and capacity he is discharging that high office, is, I am sure, known to all of you. I, along with the other Presiding Officers and their Deputies of the various Legislatures of this land, had opportunities of working with him in close co-operation during our conferences. His is a remarkable capacity of sweet persuasiveness, clear and lucid exposition and right direction. We all felt properly guided without being oppressed by his greatness. The other day, I had an opportunity of witnessing the Dominion Parliament at work for a few days and saw how greatly he is respected by the whole House. An incident which I saw, is worth mentioning. A Government Bill was under discussion. An amendment to one of the clauses had great support from a large number, but the Government was unable to accept it. The Speaker took the matter in hand, clearly and concisely explained the implications both of the original clause and the proposed amendment, and without appearing to unduly interfere with the course of the debate, persuaded the Government to agree to a postponement of the matter till after lunch, so that the Government might have an opportunity of examining the question further and meeting the wishes of the House. As I looked on, I must confess to a sense of elation that all unknowingly I was following the same procedure myself. The House might be aware, that some times I try to do some such thing here and it also drew a mild protest from an Hon. Minister on one occasion. I am now fortified in my opinion that the Presiding Officer should not be a mere automaton. He should take a real and live interest in the matters under discussion and whenever necessary, should explain matters impartially so that the House can properly appreciate the point and come to a right decision, without at the same time unduly interfering with the course of debate or curtailing

the rights of the Hon. Members. I feel confident that under the guidance of its first Speaker, the Indian Parliament will set high standards of correct Legislative procedure, and I have great pleasure to extend to the Hon. Shri Mavlankarji a hearty welcome to our House and hope the House will appreciate his gesture in coming here and accord him a proper reception."

(The Hon. Shri G. V. Mavalankar was then garlanded by the President.)

* THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Sir, I consider this a great privilege that this House should have an opportunity of welcoming our distinguished visitor the Hon. Shri G. V. Mavalankar. It is right that this House is called the Upper House. When the size of the House is considered, perhaps we are not; when the number is considered, perhaps we are not, but we do claim an importance, all its own. The people also acknowledge us as the Upper House. To us, your visit is an honour and we do not have that honour often in the life of our legislature. It is a rare event that you, Sir, representing the Parliament of India, the august assembly at Delhi, should find time during your tours here, to peep in here in this House. As Leader of the House, I am very glad to welcome you here on behalf of the House and also add our tribute to the very fine words which have come from the President of this Council. We echo his sentiments and we do believe that you have conferred a very great honour on us by visiting this House. I know, Sir, that you are out on a pilgrimage in South India. We are glad, Sir, that we in the south can attract people of your type to our midst, not so much for ourselves as for the number of Gods we possess. (Laughter.) We can through our shrines attract your heart and your mind and get the privilege of your visit to South India. It is a rare privilege for us that you have found time to peep in here into this Council. On behalf of the Members of the House, I tender you my heartfelt welcome in our midst. I hope you will carry with you very fine recollections of the fine sights that you have seen here and will go back to your place elated both in body and mind as well as in soul."

* DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Mr. President, I have very great pleasure in associating myself with the very warm welcome which you and the Hon. the Leader of the House have accorded to the Hon. Shri G. V. Mavalankar on his visit to this Province and to this House. Sir, the country has watched with great admiration his career and he could justly be proud of the public services he has rendered. Within a few days he will be the Speaker of the House of the People in a democracy, the biggest in the world. I am quite sure that the example which he sets will be a source of inspiration and will be followed not only by the Speakers and the Chairmen of the legislatures of the states in India but also by the legislatures outside this country.

" Sir, in the conflict in the world between totalitarianism and democracy, we have cast our lot with a democratic structure of Government, and if democracy is to function, we have to protect

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the rights of the Legislature which is supreme in a democratic structure of society. And that right of the Legislature cannot be protected by anybody more than the Speaker of the House of the People at Delhi. I am sure, Sir, that he will keep up the dignity, the prestige and the authority of the Chair in a manner unequalled by any and equalled by few. Sir, one thing which I have noted with admiration and pleasure in the proceedings of the Central Legislature presided over by him is the opportunity, the convenience, the facility which he gives to those who criticise Government and their measures. Sir, criticism is the very breath of democratic life, and I am sure that the example which he has set in allowing a fair and free criticism and independent criticism, criticism without favour or fear of the Government, will be followed by others. Sir, on a former occasion I said—and I should like the Hon. Shri Mavalankar to know—that you, presiding over the deliberations of this House, have followed the same principle; and I said you would be an ornament to any Legislative House in any part of the world. Sir, this House which Mr. Mavalankar has now visited—he will know from persons who are competent to tell him—keeps up the level of debate at a very high pitch and when the Opposition here criticises—and they criticise not men but measures—we are always anxious that this House functions as a very useful institution and you have assisted us in that very much. I am sure, Sir, that every Member of the House of the People, every section of it including the Government and the Opposition, will always uphold the authority, the prestige and the dignity of the Chair, with which only he can function efficiently and properly, as in this House you will remember that every section of the House tries to uphold your authority, your dignity and your prestige. I am sure, Sir, as I said before, the rulings which he will give as Speaker of the House of the People at Delhi might be quoted before long in other Houses of Parliament and perhaps in the Mother of Parliaments, in the British House of Commons; because I know from reputation and from the proceedings which I have followed, that he by ability, by efficiency, by humour, learning and tact and by every other quality which makes a successful Speaker, will be able to give a lead to other Speakers of other Houses.

" Sir, I want to associate myself with all the sentiments and the tributes expressed by you and the Leader of the House, and I hope when the Hon. Shri Mavalankar leaves this place and leaves this House, he will go away with the feeling that he has seen very nice places in South India and also a very good House, which, as the Leader of the House said, is the Upper House and which I have always considered to be the superior House, without of course disparaging the other House. I have also said that the public impression is that the criticism of the measures introduced by the Government in this Council is at a very high level and we also try to support the prestige of the Government and the Ministers, we give them our co-operation where co-operation ought to be given and I can pay this tribute—although I have earned a reputation that I have rarely paid a compliment to the Government

and that compliments are few and far between—I can pay this tribute in your presence that our Ministers here are patriotic gentlemen, sincere in their work; and if they make mistakes, it is not out of corruption or any other motive. I can compliment them on their sincerity, hard work and patriotism. I must also refer to the great good humour of the Leader of the House and particularly of the Premier who disarms criticism by his smiles.

" Thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to associate myself in the welcome given to the hon. Mr. Mavalankar."

MRS. M. HENSMAN :—" Sir, I had not intended to speak this morning, but it is a rare privilege to be called upon at this time to add a few words to the remarks that have already been made. Sir, I have been in this House since 1937 and have taken an interest in the work that we have done. But I can surely say with great assurance and sincerity that never has this House been more like a family than it is at this time. We represent different languages, different creeds, even different sexes (laughter) but believe me that we are all one in uniting to seek the best in all the Bills brought forward by the Government and in all the non-official Bills for which we sometimes think we have less time given; as non-official Bills are brought forward by those who wish to raise this province to something greater and better than it has been. We have watched Mr. Mavalankar's career from the beginning, we are proud indeed to have him here to-day; and we know from the women in the Central Legislature how wonderful he is as a Speaker. But, be it personal pride or provincial pride, we hold that our President of this Council is second to none (laughter) in his wit, in his humour, in his rare appreciation of all the points that arise, thorny or otherwise. Although we have in fact frank discussions in this House, we certainly stand together, whether on the Treasury Bench or on this side. The Treasury Bench is most sympathetic and very frank and sincere also, though sometimes it does not allow us the freedom of bringing in amendments that we wish to speak about. But I would wish to close by saying that there is a great family spirit in this place and we hope that some time, Sir, you will come again and listen to debates on controversial measures so that you may know that where we differ, we agree to differ in peace, and where we can stand together, we all follow the same line, whether we sign a party pledge or whether we stand as independents, though it may be in name only. Again, Sir, let me say we are proud indeed to have the Hon. Shri Mavalankar and his wife here to-day, though not as one of us, in the House. We have been honoured by having the Speaker of the Central Republican Legislature to be, where justice is for all, liberty is for all and where there will be no difference between man and woman or any linguistic or other tinge. We hope, Sir, that you will come again. In Tamil we have a saying ' to go and come again ' (போய் வருகிறேன்). We hope that you will only go to come again (Applause)."

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* THE HON. SHRI G. V. MAVALANKAR :—" Mr. President and Members of the House, it is indeed very difficult for me to express all that I feel on this occasion. You have said so many kind things. Your reception is perfect evidence of the warmth of your feelings, not only the speeches from all sections of the House, but the very garland which you gave me (laughter) represents the weight of your kindness and warmth. It has indeed brought to me more clearly all the responsibilities of the office which I am holding and which I shall continue to hold practically under the same circumstances, though *de jure* there will be a change. We have been practically for all purposes *de facto* an independent Parliament and the change, as you all know, is now only in the nomenclature and in procedure.

" I had a mind to come to this part of our country long long before. The country is really so beautiful; and whatever denomination you may belong to, the temples, the art and nature are all here so attractive, so fascinating, that one thinks, many a time as to whether it would not have been a greater privilege to have been born in this part of the country and stayed here for a much longer time. I had, however, the alternative of having something or nothing and I had preferred half a loaf to no loaf. This running visit, carrying impressions which are all of a type which can never be forgotten, does not satisfy me; and yet, as I said, it is not given to every one of us to continue, all his life, in conditions of his desire or ideal.

" One thing which struck me prominently and very immensely was the conception of those master-builders and artists who conceived the structures of temples on such huge scales and the perfection of the art in the statues and other things. It makes one pause and think that this must be the work of a people who had great minds and always conceived great things on a large all-pervading scale. As the saying goes, small minds and big empires go ill together. Similarly, unless the people had devotion, selfless devotion, spirituality unrivalled elsewhere, love and humanitarian instincts, it would not have been possible for them to build the huge temples, which were not only for worship, not only intended for devotion, but were centres of education, spread of culture and also of social work. I noticed that every temple is an institution and I was just thinking as to whether it is not necessary for us collectively again to assimilate the principles underlying, especially when we want to found our democracy on such a wide foundation and base as adult franchise.

" Our democracy, whatever its form, cannot in substance come up to our expectations, unless we all unitedly and earnestly, notwithstanding our differences of viewpoints and approaches, try our best to raise the level of the common man both materially and morally.

" Of course, when I say ' morally ' it does include even spiritually. The temples just provide us an example and I was feeling all along as to whether it would not be possible for us to

take the soul of these institutions and to work up institutions of such type in a manner suited to new conditions and new outlook. I am really going back to the north with an inspiration about these things on the lines I have said, and I shall always be eager to return not for a flying visit but for a visit of a longer duration, and as the saying goes—I do not know what the Tamil saying is, but the saying in Marathi goes—if a man did a thing twice, he will probably do it the third time. I have come to these parts twice and therefore, I may as well hope to be here a third time. I do not know when the time will come. It may not come, but at any rate, my desire is keen on that point and I can assure you I am going back with a lot of inspiration, wider point of view and a more tntimate knowledge of our people in different parts of the country.

" As regards the successful working of our Parliament, all of you have been very pleased to speak about me and my capacity. It has a touch of the *Athisayokthi Alankara*, that is, the figure of speech called exaggeration. But all the same, as I see your hearts, it speaks out your affection and love for the institution which I serve and which has undertaken the governance of the country for the benefit of 300 millions. But when we give credit to one individual, who happens to be the token-head you would perhaps be detracting something from the merit of all those without whose co-operation no work on a bigger scale is possible. The commander fights out the battle and wins but the real credit of doing the whole thing very successfully goes, I think, to the unknown soldier. So, but for the co-operation of the Members of the House, I do not think any presiding authority can successfully conduct the affairs of the House. I would like you, therefore, to divide the honours and the credit between myself and the Members of the House and not to give them wholly to me. Perhaps a larger share is due to the Members of the House because it is they who as democrats understand their own responsibilities and limitations and therefore, contribute to the smooth working of the House.

" As said by one of you, cricitism is always a good thing. Even where it comes *mala fide*, it does not harm those who work. If it is not *bona fide*, it harms those who criticise. That is why one of the Saint poets of Maharashtra has said in his prayer to God: 'Oh, God, give me a neighbour who will always engage himself in criticizing me.' In such a case, the neighbour would always be on the alert to see where we commit mistakes. He would be a great friend and prevent us from committing more mistakes. That is the usefulness of criticism. And in a democratic structure of governance of the country, one has not only not to avoid criticisms but perhaps actively to encourage them. That is how I look upon the critics of Government. If the critics go beyond their legitimate sphere they come down by their own excesses and it does not become necessary for us to raise any iron hand to put them down.

" But I need not take up your time and I have nothing more to add. You are perhaps much more conversant with parliamentary

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democracies. There is, however, one aspect which I would like to say and that is that our democracy is a new one in every sense of the term. We have adopted the form but the mere adoption of the form is not the same thing as having the substance of it. Democracy is more a matter of substance than of form, though forms perhaps indicate the conditions of democracy. Though Western precedents might help us materially, yet, I feel that democracy is a matter of our making and will take a long time to evolve. That means that a much larger responsibility rests on those on whom the work lies at present, to run these democracies. Among them, I would include in the sharers of that responsibility not merely the presiding authority but the Ministry as well as the Opposition. One essential thing that each one must have before him is the advance of the interests of the country, measured in terms of the masses. In other words, the public life has to become impersonal. That is what you find in England. There is such an amount of spirit of tolerance, a desire to understand the view points of others, a recognition of the fact that there can be as many views as there are people and that all need not agree. There is a spirit of tolerance and compromise. It is only by working in this manner that we shall be able to create a spirit of cordiality and to make our democracy successful. I do not think that I should take any more of your time. I thank you very sincerely for all the good words that you have said about me and the good wishes expressed for me and my wife. I can only pray that it might be given to me to shoulder the burden in a proper manner and to come up to your expectations.

"I thank you very much for the kind and warm reception you have given to me."

The Hon. Shri G. V. Mavalankar watched the proceedings of the Council for a few minutes and then left the Chamber.

TRUTH ALONE TRIUMPHS